

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WILDLIFE & FRESHWATER FISH MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, November 29, 2016

Richardson & Robbins Building Auditorium

89 Kings Highway, Dover, Delaware

Phone 302-739-9912, FAX 302-739-6157

ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. Edward A. Montague, Chair
2. Garrett Grier, Jr., Vice Chair
3. Raymond F. Burris
4. Neal Dukes
5. Robert C. Nichols (Absent)
6. Craig A. Karsnitz (Absent)
7. Joe C. Johnson
8. Steven M. Kendus
9. Dale R. Scuse (Absent)

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

1. Director David E. Saveikis
2. Chief Drew Aydelotte
3. Joe Rogerson
4. Anthony Gonzon
5. Justyn Foth
6. Bruce Cole
7. Emily Boyd
8. Karen Bennett
9. Karen Kennedy

PUBLIC

- 2 Visitors

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Montague at 7:00 PM.

Agenda Item 1. Approval of Minutes (Chairman).

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve the October 25, 2016 meeting minutes as written.

Agenda Item 2. State Sports Fishing Tournament (Bruce Cole).

Bruce Cole, environmental scientist with the Fisheries Section, gave a PowerPoint presentation on enhancements to the Division's annual Delaware Sport Fishing Tournament. The tournament, which recognizes anglers for outstanding catches for both freshwater and saltwater fish, currently includes 14 species of freshwater fish and 29 species of saltwater fish eligible for recognition. A Live Release Award is also given to anglers that choose to release their trophy catch, unharmed. Mr. Cole shared some upcoming changes to the program, including the addition of cobia and snakeheads. Snakeheads, being an invasive species, will have special rules requiring that they be destroyed and not released. An exciting new Elite Angler award will be awarded to anyone who earns five citations for five different species in a calendar year. Starting this year, the Division is also replacing the award patches with collectable lapel pins. Information on the tournament is available in the Delaware Fishing Guide or on the Division website at www.fw.delaware.gov.

Agenda Item 3. Augustine Wildlife Area Wildlife Viewing Concept (Anthony Gonzon).

Anthony Gonzon, Delaware Bayshore Initiative Coordinator, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Augustine Wildlife Area Cooper-Cross Tract Wildlife Viewing Concept. Delaware's Bayshore Byway runs along Route 9 from New Castle to Kitts Hummock, with plans to extend it to Lewes, and passes multiple state wildlife areas. There have been several Bayshore-funded wildlife area improvements to date, including providing better access and parking for hunters, wildlife viewers and other users engaged in wildlife-related recreation at the Morris Tract of the Ted Harvey Wildlife Area. Other improvements include an upgraded waterfowl check station for the Little Creek Wildlife Area and a new wildlife viewing platform/trail, parking area and improved access for waterfowl hunting at the Ashton Tract of the Augustine Wildlife Area. The Division is currently seeking input on a concept design for the Cooper-Cross parcel of the Augustine Wildlife Area along Route 9 adjacent to the Lang impoundment near Port Penn. Completed improvements include removal of an old building and trailer, habitat improvement, invasive species management and construction of a gravel parking area. The next step is construction of a trail and wildlife viewing area. The Division has contracted Rummel, Klepper & Kahl to develop concept plans and prepare construction documents to construct a wildlife viewing facility. Mr. Gonzon stated that comments on the concept design are welcomed and encouraged from Council and the public.

Councilman Kendus inquired if there had been any concerns about this being across from a shooting range. Mr. Gonzon replied that no concerns have been raised to date, possibly because wildlife activities at the

new facility will be conducted distant from the shooting range, but that we would like to have input from additional stakeholders and adjacent landowners.

Agenda Item 4. Avian Influenza Surveillance of Delaware Waterfowl (Justyn Foth).

Justyn Foth, waterfowl and gamebird biologist, gave a PowerPoint presentation on Surveillance of Avian Influenza within Waterfowl in Delaware. Avian influenza was discovered globally in the year 1878, with 15 known outbreaks through 1995. Since the discovery of the highly pathogenic Asian H5N1 strain was found in a goose in China in the year 1996, there have been at least 11 outbreaks. The first human case was documented in 1997 and the disease has spread to 60 countries, resulting in 630 human cases reported and 375 deaths since the year 2003. This high pathogenic Asian H5N1 strain has affected millions of poultry worldwide. During initial sampling efforts from January 1, 2006 to March 5, 2009, 8,282 birds were sampled in Delaware by the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife and USDA-Wildlife Services, superseded in sample number by only Alaska. Several of the Delaware samples contained the low-pathogenic strain common in wildlife, but no high pathogenic strains were documented. From December 2014 through June 2015, a highly pathogenic North American strain of H5N1 was detected in U.S. domestic poultry, captive wild birds and wild birds. In 2015 and 2016, the H5 virus (the low pathogenic strain) was detected in nine and five birds from Delaware, respectfully. Since sampling began in August of this year, three American green-winged teal and two mallards tested positive for a low-pathogenic H5 virus, but negative for the highly pathogenic H5 strains. The Division will continue to monitor waterfowl throughout the 2016/2017 hunting season and during post-season banding efforts.

Agenda Item 5. Director Update (David E. Saveikis).

Director Saveikis gave an update that the Division is on schedule in modifying the eGov license system to sell the new Conservation Access Pass established by H.B 401 by July 1, 2017. The Conservation Access Pass will be issued free with the purchase of a hunting license and would be purchased by non-hunters for vehicles accessing state wildlife areas. The pass will be printed on paper and displayed on vehicle dashboards. The next steps involve wildlife and enforcement staff developing on-the-ground implementation details.

Director Saveikis provided Sunday deer harvest results to date. 116 deer were harvested statewide on October 9, the first day of Sunday deer hunting in Delaware. 557 deer were harvested statewide on

November 13 and 227 deer were harvested on November 20, for a total of 900 deer harvested. There are two additional Sundays for deer hunting in Delaware, December 11, 2016 and January 15, 2017.

Director Saveikis provided Council members with the fall edition of the Outdoor Delaware magazine, which features an article on our new K-9 officers, Rosco and River, written by Lt. Casey Zolper and Officers Chelsea Allen and Josh Hudson. Also included are our customary informative Econote series on wildlife areas featuring Augustine Wildlife Area by Eric Ludwig, Fishing by Bruce Cole and Hunting by William Jones.

Chairman Montague publicly thanked the Division on this year's accomplishments.

Ray Cranmer, a member of the audience, expressed his concerns on hunting regulation changes at Taylors Gut in the Woodland Beach Wildlife Area.

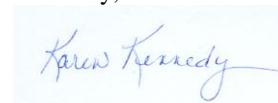
PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL FUTURE COUNCIL MEETINGS WILL BEGIN AT 7:00 PM

AGENDA FOR THE 1/31/2017 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

1. Approval of Minutes (Chairman).
2. Proposed Little Creek Wildlife Observation Tower and Boardwalk Renovation (Anthony Gonzon).
3. Delaware Bat Research, Monitoring and Conservation (Holly Niederriter).
4. Delaware Phragmites Control Program (Bill Jones).
5. Director Update (David E. Saveikis).

There being no further business, a motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Sincerely,



Karen Kennedy
Recording Secretary